

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIES 6222

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1116(E) OF THE
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT/CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

REF: STATE 193756

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES MR. MEEKER'S PROPOSED VISIT AS A
MEANS OF OBTAINING A PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT WHETHER, AS
THE CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY ASSUMES, ARGENTINA
IS INDEED "GOOD ENOUGH FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO BE
POSSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE IN PROMOTING JUSTICE."

2. THERE HAS BEEN IN RECENT WEEKS A GROWING ATMOSPHERE OF
BITTERNESS IN THE GOA AND BILATERAL RELATIONS HAVE DETERIORATED
BECAUSE OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS SANCTIONS POLICIES. IN
THE PRESENT HOSTILE CLIMATE THERE IS A HIGH DEGREE OF
RISK IN ANY FOREIGN FINANCIAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE
SENSITIVE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD. ESPECIALLY
IF THE CENTER WERE TO ADOPT A ONE-DIMENSAIONAL
APPROACH TO THE QUESTION BY, FOR EXAMPLE, CHANNELLING
FUNDS THROUGH A LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCY FOR THE
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LEGAL DEFENSE OF TERRORIST SUSPECTS, THERE IS NEAR
CERTAINTY THAT THE GOA WOULD REGARD SUCH ACTIVITY
AS BLATANT MEDDLING IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE
PLURALISTIC NUANCES CITED IN REFTEL AS SERVING TO
REASSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE CENTER'S INDEPENDENCE
FROM THE USG WOULD BE ENTIRELY LOST ON THE ARGENTINES
--ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF MR. MEEKER'S PAST

ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT. IF THE CENTER WERE TO RUN AFOUL OF THE GOA, THEREFORE, THIS WOULD HAVE A DIRECTLY WORSENING IMPACT ON US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS AND WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN TERMS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSE HERE.

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THIS PROJECT WOULD HAVE GREATER CHANCES OF SURVIVAL IF MR. MEEKER WERE TO APPROACH HIS INITIAL VISIT WITH A VIEW TO CONTACTING A BROAD SPECTRUM OF LOCAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING GOA OFFICIALS, WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY BROACHING THE FINANCING POSSIBILITIES DURING THIS FIRST ROUND OF CONTACTS. WE HAVE IN MIND CONTACTS WITH THE ARGENTINE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, THE COURT SYSTEM, THE BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS INTERESTED IN JUDICIAL REFORM AND A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST GROUP SUCH AS THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. IF MR. MEEKER WERE INITIALLY TO CONTACT THE ARGENTINES WITH THE STATED INTENT OF WISHING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WEAKNESSES IN THE ARGENTINE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRASTIC ANTI-TERRORIST METHODS USED BY THE SECURITY FORCES AND FROM THERE PROCEEDED TO DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLY MAKING AVAILABLE COMPARATIVE FOREIGN LEGAL EXPERIENCE, THIS APPROACH WOULD HAVE BETTER PROSPECTS OF MINIMIZING THE RISK OF GOA'S NIPPING THE PROJECT IN THE BUD. AFTER MEEKER HAS

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GAINED A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE LAY OF THE LAND AND ITS MANY PITFALLS, HE COULD BETTER DEVISE A PRACTICABLE FINANCING PROJECT, PERHAPS INCLUDING GENERAL LEGAL STUDIES FOCUSING ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ARGENTINE LAW SUCH AS IMPROVING CRIMINAL PROCEDURES, ETC.

4. EMBASSY PREPARED TO ASSIST MR. MEEKER IN ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS IF HE WISHES.

5. PLEASE ADVISE IF MEEKER ALREADY IS IN CONTACT WITH ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND HAS APPROACHED THEM REGARDING FINANCING POSSIBILITIES.

CASTRO

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